



Michigan National Organization for Women

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June 9, 2015

Members of the Michigan House Criminal Justice Committee
State Capitol
Lansing, Michigan

Greetings:

The Michigan National Organization for Women **opposes House Bill 4479** on your agenda today. The bill would include an assault or assault and battery directed against a pregnant woman as an assault or assault or battery that would be subject to the enhanced penalties for repeat offenses similar to those against an individual committing domestic violence.

The reason we oppose the current language is because it is overly broad and is likely intended or may give rise to the interpretation that the Legislature intended to give a fetus legal status as a protected class under state law. Giving a fetus protected class status would be a threat to the health and well-being of all child-bearing age women in Michigan.

If the Legislature wants to enhance penalties for those who assault vulnerable people, we suggest the following language instead of the proposed phrase "**OR AGAINST AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS PREGNANT.**"

**. . . AGAINST EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS AT HEALTH FACILITIES,
AGAINST A PERSON WITH A VISIBLE DISABILITY, AGAINST A MINOR PERSON,
AGAINST A VULNERABLE ADULT AS DEFINED IN MCLA ???, AGAINST A
DIAGNOSED MENTALLY ILL OR DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED PERSON, OR
AGAINST A PERSON WHO THE INDIVIDUAL KNEW WAS 65 YEARS OR OLDER.**

This may not be an all-inclusive list of those victims of assault about whom society feels particularly protective but we think it may be a good start.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Mary Pollock
for Michigan NOW
NOW National Board Member

NOW's purpose is to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men.